

VZCZCXRO5137
OO RUEHGI RUEHMA RUEHROV
DE RUEHKH #0094/01 0261423
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
O 261423Z JAN 09
FM AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 2768
INFO RUCNFUR/DARFUR COLLECTIVE
RUCNIAD/IGAD COLLECTIVE
RHMFISS/CJTJF HOA

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 KHARTOUM 000094

DEPT FOR AF A A/S CARTER, AF/SPG, AF/C
ADDIS ABABA FOR USAU
DEPT PLS PASS USAID FOR AFR/SUDAN

SENSITIVE
SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: [ASEC](#) [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [KPKO](#) [SOCI](#) [AU](#) [UNSC](#) [SU](#)
SUBJECT: NCP ALLEGEDLY ARMING ITS DARFUR ALLIES AS ICC LOOMS

REF: A) KHARTOUM 92
B) 08 KHARTOUM 1745
C) 08 KHARTOUM 1387

11. (SBU) Summary: In preparation for potential unrest in Darfur, several sources reported that the NCP has begun a large-scale arms distribution program in all three states of Darfur. In Nyala, an SPLM official alleged that the NCP is paying families to accept Kalashnikovs. Meanwhile, Fur IDP leaders expressed fear about potential retribution following the announcement of an ICC arrest warrant against Sudan's president. In El Fasher, an NCP political activist boasted that the GOS distributed over 1,000 pistols to students and government employees in January. A report from El Geneina indicated the government has begun a similar program in West Darfur as well. End summary.

NYALA: JIHAD FOR USD\$150

12. (SBU) On January 23, Omer Abdelrahman, Minister of Agriculture in South Darfur and a member of the opposition SPLM, told poloff that NCP officials began officially rearming its Popular Defense Forces in South Darfur in January in preparation for possible unrest following the upcoming announcement of an ICC arrest warrant against Sudanese President Omar El Bashir. In addition to the thousands of janjaweed militiamen already recruited to the Central Reserve Police and the Border Intelligence Forces in late 2008 (reftel B), the local government has begun approaching Arab civilians within Nyala to enlist them as potential armed allies, according to the outspoken opposition politician. "They say you should have to go for jihad, and then swear on the Koran to the NCP," Abdelrahman said, relating that each consenting family is paid 300 Sudanese pounds (about USD\$150) and given one Kalashnikov. "Now I must carry my Kalashnikov with me, because I don't know if I will return," he said, fearful for his own life and the potential for an NCP overreaction. "In defense against Khalil Ibrahim and Minni Minnawi, we will kill ourselves fully!"

13. (SBU) Meeting with poloff in Nyala on January 22, a group of Fur leaders expressed fear of the renewal of intra-tribal warfare led by the NCP following the announcement of the ICC arrest warrant. Dr. Salahdeen Mohamed, who had served as the NCP-designated Maqdom (Viceroy) of the Fur tribe before breaking with them over the August 25, 2008 Kalma IDP camp massacre, told poloff that he was "worried and afraid" that the GOS would mobilize Darfuri Arabs to enact revenge against Darfur's African tribes "worse than before." Having recently severed his association with the NCP, Mohamed said he puts no faith in UNAMID to protect the Fur people either in the IDP camps (such as happened when 33 IDPs were killed by SAF at Kalma camp in August,) or in vulnerable rural areas. Dr. Mahmoud Adam Daoud, a Fur intellectual and professor of French at the University of Nyala, and two other Fur leaders in attendance, repeated what SPLM leader Abdelrahman had told poloff. They claimed that the distribution of

arms to janjaweed and Arab allies in South Darfur had begun in January; one added that even his Arab neighbor had received a Kalashnikov this month.

EL FASHER: 1000 PISTOLS FOR STUDENTS AND BUREAUCRATS

¶4. (SBU) Abdel Nur Mohammed Adam, an NCP political activist in North Darfur, told polasst in El Fasher on January 25 that in the first week of January, the NCP distributed weapons to university and secondary students belonging to the NCP's youth branch, asking them to defend the government in the wake of civil unrest following the ICC arrest warrant's issuance. Adam alleged that the government had distributed approximately 1,000 pistols in and around El Fasher, and should unrest break out in El Fasher, Adam predicts that the NCP will overreact. The NCP intends to call on students, government employees and the Sudanese Armed Forces to protect the president and NCP members. As justification for the weapons distribution, Adam added that the NCP claims members of Hassan al-Turabi's People's Congress Party in El Fasher have weapons as well, and that they are expected to attack the NCP when the ICC announces its decision.

¶5. (SBU) Speaking with poloff in El Fasher, two Darfuri civil society activists voiced their fear over the coming months for IDPs and civilians in North Darfur. Khalil Tukras, a lawyer and well-connected human rights activist in El Fasher, said that while the majority of NCP allies in North Darfur are already armed, weapons have been distributed since September 2008 to NCP-allied tribes currently living in IDP camps. Tukras added that he was "sure the GOS will react like they did at Kalma camp" (reftel C). Ahmed Adam Yousif, a lawyer and director of the independent human

KHARTOUM 00000094 002 OF 002

rights NGO Ajaweed, was visibly concerned when he told poloff, "The GOS is insisting on fighting to the end." While noting that some Arab militias have begun to turn against the NCP, and that IDPs had already begun to celebrate the ICC decision, Yousif lamented that "there is no light at the end of the tunnel. There is no solution in the near future."

EL GENEINA: REPORTS INDICATE SIMILAR DEVELOPMENTS

¶6. (SBU) On January 25, poloff was briefed by Bastienne Karel, a Sudan watcher for the Netherlands MFA who had recently returned from El Geneina and found similar developments regarding the wide-scale distribution of arms in West Darfur. According to Karel, a drastic deterioration in security is expected following the ICC announcement because the GOS has begun rearming Arab militias. Karel passed along reports that the GOS has flown in arms "on a large scale" through the new airport and is currently arming NCP-allied sheikhs in the IDP camps, relying on them to distribute arms to their IDPs (Note: Darfur's IDP camps are riven by ethnic rivalries with smaller, weaker African tribes allying with the NCP because of fears of more numerous and better armed tribes, such as the Fur and Zaghawa. End note). Karel added that Arabs not formally part of the GOS security apparatus are now receiving military personnel serial numbers in addition to weapons, although payments for future services reportedly have not commenced.

¶7. (SBU) Even regime allies are wondering if things may be spiraling out of control. Notorious janjaweed warlord Musa Hilal told CDA Fernandez on January 20 as much by phone in Darfur (some accounts say Hilal himself has been involved in weapons distribution, a charge he vociferously denied). Hilal cryptically noted that "everyone is getting ready to defend what they have from everyone else" in the coming weeks.

¶8. (SBU) Comment: As usual in Darfur, hard evidence is hard to come by, and much of this information should be evaluated carefully as many of our contacts' claims appear to be based on rumor and conjecture. But the prevalence and frequency of these claims in all three states of Darfur is concerning. While the GOS attempts to weaken its opponents (especially JEM) and demonstrates its military

might by conducting aerial and ground attacks in South and North Darfur, UNAMID remains incapable of acting as a stabilizing force. If the allegations reported in this cable are true, the addition of new weaponry to the mix in Darfur will undoubtedly lead to more bloodshed in the long run and may even strengthen the rebels as it will fuel the region's arms trade. There is also no guarantee that Darfur's alienated and fractious Arab tribes, currently allied by naked self-interest with the NCP, will remain loyal. While we do not expect the doomsday scenarios to come true, an uptick in violence is quite possible in the coming months, and it will be important for the international community to urge restraint on all sides in the aftermath of the ICC announcement. End comment.

FERNANDEZ